

# Critical care when you need us most

## Safe, responsive, short-term care for adults in crisis

Our Essex hospital offers gender-specific Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICU) and acute services for adults aged 18-65 years with complex mental health needs, including those with forensic histories or in the criminal justice system.



### Making a referral

St Andrew's Healthcare Essex,  
Pound Lane, North Benfleet,  
Essex, SS12 9JP

 **0800 434 6690**

 **sah.picuacute@nhs.net**

 **stah.org/picu-acute**

View our latest bed availability at  
**stah.org/picu-acute**

**“** I cannot praise the staff enough for my care during my recovery. I genuinely wouldn't have been where I am today if it wasn't for them. **”**

Male acute patient on Benfleet ward

Inspected and rated

Good



# We're here to support you

If you need help for someone with urgent or complex mental health needs, our specialist PICU and acute teams in Essex are here for you – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We support adults experiencing an acute deterioration in their mental health, including those with co-existing needs such as personality disorder or forensic risk. For over 10 years, we've worked closely with NHS and criminal justice partners to provide short-term, high-intensity care in safe, therapeutic environments.

We can support patients who cannot be managed and cared for in other settings, including:

- ✔ general acute hospitals
- ✔ PICUs
- ✔ prison or criminal justice services.

Our PICU and acute services in Essex are rated 'Good' by the CQC



“Staff treated patients with compassion and kindness. They understood the individual needs of patients and supported them to manage their care.”

Latest CQC Inspection Report

## Why commissioners choose us

- ✔ CQC rated 'Good' across all domains
- ✔ Nationally accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) Quality Network for PICUs and the National Association of PICUs (NAPICU)\*
- ✔ Average PICU and acute length of stays that are shorter than national benchmarks
- ✔ Strong multidisciplinary expertise in supporting forensic and high-risk patients
- ✔ Comprehensive psychiatric assessment and medication management guided by the NICE standards
- ✔ A focus on discharge with social work embedded into our multidisciplinary team (MDT)
- ✔ Daily bed availability updates through [stah.org/picu-acute](http://stah.org/picu-acute)
- ✔ On-site pathways into mental health rehabilitation services



\* Applies to Audley male PICU ward.



## ▶ Sian's recovery story

After experiencing trauma in her life, Sian needed urgent specialist support to help manage her mental health and build the skills to move forward. Scan the QR code to watch her story.

“If I wasn't in Andrew's, I might have been struggling on my own. Thank you to the staff for giving me more of the tools I need to get over the trauma that I've been through.”

Sian, female acute patient on Frinton ward

# Our PICU and acute services

## Audley ward Male PICU

11 beds

A high-dependency service supporting men detained under the Mental Health Act (MHA).

We deliver stabilisation, intensive support and discharge planning for patients experiencing psychosis, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or co-existing personality disorder.



## PICU admission criteria

We can accept patients who:

- ✓ are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007)
- ✓ present with high levels of risk to self or others
- ✓ are experiencing acute mental illness, relapse or crisis
- ✓ have a forensic history, are on remand or in custody
- ✓ may present with behaviours that challenge or co-morbid needs.

All referrals are clinically reviewed. We aim to respond within 2 hours of receiving full clinical documentation.

## Acute admission criteria

We can accept patients who:

- ✓ are informal or detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007)
- ✓ are experiencing schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or drug-induced psychosis
- ✓ are at risk to themselves or others
- ✓ require short-term inpatient care to prevent escalation.

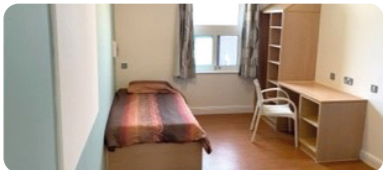
This service is not suitable for individuals with a primary diagnosis of dementia or learning disability.

## Benfleet ward Male acute

16 beds

A short-stay recovery ward for men experiencing acute deterioration in mental health.

We support stabilisation, risk management and community reintegration, with full MDT support.



## Frinton ward Female acute

12 beds

Providing care for women requiring a step-up from community services or a step-down from more secure settings.

We deliver structured, therapeutic support and close collaboration with families and care coordinators.



“My care has been brilliant. I can now maintain my composure and manage my stress.”

Male PICU patient on Audley ward

## ▶ Mikey's recovery story

Following a manic episode, Mikey was supported by our specialist MDTs to take control of his mental health and continue his work in music. Scan the QR code to watch his story.



“My 60s are just coming up and I'm hoping to live my 50s through my 60s, free, true and with love in my heart. And a lot of it is down to this establishment.”

Mikey, male acute patient on Benfleet ward



# Expert care, tailored to each individual

Every patient in our PICU and acute services is supported by a comprehensive multidisciplinary team with the knowledge and experience to manage complex and high-risk presentations, including those with forensic needs. Our MDT ensures effective assessment, risk management, and therapeutic engagement from admission to discharge.

## Our team includes:

- ✓ Consultant forensic psychiatrists
- ✓ Clinical and forensic psychologists
- ✓ Specialist mental health nurses and senior healthcare assistants
- ✓ Occupational therapists
- ✓ Technical instructors
- ✓ Social workers
- ✓ Sport and exercise therapists
- ✓ Clinical pharmacy

## We also provide:

- ✓ Access to dietetics and physiotherapy
- ✓ General Practitioner (GP) liaison and physical health care
- ✓ Close partnership with community mental health teams
- ✓ Rehabilitation pathways for patients moving beyond an acute phase



# Designed to support recovery, resilience and independence

The wards and grounds at our Essex hospital provide safe, engaging spaces that promote personal development, wellbeing and reintegration.

## On-ward facilities include:

- ✓ Single en-suite bedrooms to protect privacy and dignity
- ✓ Structured therapeutic environments following Safewards principles
- ✓ Calm and sensory rooms to support emotional regulation
- ✓ Shared communal lounges and therapy spaces

“ I learnt a lot about my strengths and weaknesses, and I learnt how to treat people how I would want to be treated. ”

Male PICU patient on Audley ward

## Therapeutic and recovery-focused activities:

- ✓ Psychological therapies including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), DBT informed approaches, and trauma-focused interventions
- ✓ Award-winning 'Green gym' therapy garden with horticulture and nature-based rehabilitation
- ✓ Structured OT sessions – cooking, shopping, budgeting and personal care
- ✓ Vocational, educational and creative groups – music, art, baking
- ✓ Fitness and sport sessions – walking, football, gym and yoga
- ✓ Personalised care plans with measurable outcomes

“ This is the first-place people really care about me and want me to do things and to do well. ”

Female acute patient on Frinton ward



# Support for carers, family and friends

We recognise the vital role carers, family and friends play in a person's recovery. That's why we prioritise open communication, emotional support and collaboration, from admission to discharge.

## You can expect:

- ✓ A named contact to answer questions and offer updates
- ✓ Involvement in care planning and ward reviews (with patient consent)
- ✓ Advocacy access and carer-specific resources
- ✓ Flexible visiting arrangements

“Thank you for your care and support in helping my son recover. It's very much appreciated by me and his family.”

Parent of a male acute patient on Benfleet Ward



## Making a referral

Our PICU and acute services accept urgent referrals 24/7. We aim to provide a decision within two hours of receiving full clinical information.

☎ 0800 434 6690

✉ [sah.picuacute@nhs.net](mailto:sah.picuacute@nhs.net)

🌐 [stah.org/picu-acute](http://stah.org/picu-acute)

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